9 September 2004

Original: English

Committee on Conferences
Substantive session of 2004

Draft report

Rapporteur: Mr. Mu'taz **Hyassat** (Jordan)

I. Organizational matters

A. Membership

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 43/222 B of 21 December 1988, decided to retain the Committee on Conferences as a permanent subsidiary organ. Pursuant to the provisions of that resolution, in 2004 the Committee was composed of the following Member States: Argentina, Austria, Bolivia, Congo, Ethiopia, France, Germany, India, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Mexico, Nepal, Nigeria, Romania, the Russian Federation, Senegal, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, the United States of America and Zambia.

B. Officers

2. At its organizational session for 2004, the Committee elected the following officers to serve in 2004:

Chairman:
Enno Drofenik (Austria)

Vice-Chairpersons:
Norma Taylor Roberts (Jamaica)
Saleh Manu Pisagih (Nigeria)
Laura Onisii (Romania)

Rapporteur:
Mohammad Tal (Jordan)

At its substantive session, the Committee elected Mu'taz Hyassat (Jordan) to replace Mr. Tal.

3. At the same session, the Committee agreed in principle that the Chairman would undertake informal consultations with a view to determining the composition of the Committee's Bureau in 2005.

C. Organization of work

4. At its organizational session (456th meeting), the Committee agreed to follow the guidelines adopted in 1994 and 1995 with regard to consideration of intersessional departures from the approved calendar of conferences and to meet, as required, to review proposals affecting the schedule of conferences and meetings during sessions of the General Assembly.

5. The Committee convened its substantive session on 7, 8 and 10 September 2004 (457th to 462nd meetings).

6. The Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management addressed the Committee at the opening of its organizational and substantive sessions. At the substantive session, he introduced the report of the Secretary-General on reform of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (A/59/172).

7. The report of the Secretary-General on the pattern of conferences (A/59/159) was introduced by the Assistant Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management. The consolidation into one report of all matters of a technical nature, an innovation in 2002, was continued this year.

D. Programme of work

8. At its organizational session for 2003, held on 22 April 2003, the Committee had requested the Secretariat to submit a draft agenda for 2004 to the Committee at its organizational session for 2004. At the 456th meeting, on 25 March 2004, the Committee adopted the proposed agenda (A/AC.172/2004/1) and requested the Secretariat to submit a draft agenda for 2005 to the Committee at its organizational session for 2005.

9. In order to provide more relevant advice to the General Assembly, the Committee decided to recommend for adoption by the Assembly a draft resolution reflecting the substantive discussion that took place in the Committee, thereby facilitating the consideration of the items by the Assembly.

E. Participation of observers

10. The following States were represented as observers: Canada, China, the Dominican Republic, Portugal, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Holy See.

F. Biennialization of the item entitled "Pattern of conferences" in the agenda of the General Assembly

Introduction and overview

11. At its 460th meeting, on 8 September 2004, the Committee on Conferences considered paragraphs 56 to 60 of the report of the Secretary-General on pattern of conferences (A/59/159), which included an assessment of the possibility of biennializing the item entitled "Pattern of conferences" in the agenda of the General Assembly. The representative of the Secretariat reported that biennialization appeared to be possible and practical and in accordance with the overall revitalization of the work of the Assembly. It was desirable because statistical trends resulting from organizational and methodological changes needed longer periods of time to become noticeable. It was envisaged that the Committee would continue to meet annually, continuing to biennialize its consideration of certain items. Approval of the revised calendar of conferences for the second year of the biennium could be considered by the Assembly in non-budget years under a limited agenda item, or the responsibility could be delegated to the Committee.

Discussion

12. Several delegations expressed support for recommending biennialization of the item to the General Assembly in the interest of greater efficiency, since the effects of reform could be better seen at two-year intervals. However, it was pointed out that the Committee itself had not truly biennialized its agenda items, but continued to consider all topics every year. The view was expressed that, because of the importance of conference services and the issue of multilingualism, the item merited consideration by the Assembly every year. It was felt that it was premature to consider biennialization in the midst of reform, when new experiments were constantly being undertaken and required review.

8 September 2004

Original: English

Committee on Conferences
Substantive session of 2004

Draft report

Addendum

Rapporteur: Mr. Mu'taz **Hyassat** (Jordan)

II. Calendar of conferences and meetings

A. Matters related to and intersessional departures from the approved calendar for 2004

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 58/250 of 23 December 2003, approved the draft biennial calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations for the biennium 2004-2005 as submitted by the Committee on Conferences and amended by subsequent decisions taken by the Assembly at its fifty-eighth session. The calendar was issued as document A/AC.172/2004/2.

2. At its 373rd meeting, on 26 August 1994, the Committee had decided that requests for intersessional departures submitted to the Committee should in future be reviewed by the Bureau, in consultation with the Secretariat, for subsequent action.

3. At its 379th meeting, on 23 March 1995, the Committee had agreed that proposed changes to the calendar that did not have programme budget implications could be dealt with by the Secretariat, in consultation with the Bureau of the Committee.

4. At its substantive session of 1995, the Committee had decided that requests for intersessional departures submitted to the Committee that involved a change of venue should be referred to the members for approval. Departures that involved other types of changes, as the Committee had decided at its substantive session of 1994, should be reviewed by the Bureau, in consultation with the Secretariat, for subsequent action.

5. The requests submitted in 2004 for changes of venue or additional sessions/meetings and the action taken by the Committee are set out below.

04-50026 (E)

Organ	*Request*	*Action taken*
Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions	To hold up to 10 more meetings during the week of 29 March to 2 April 2004 to take up additional reports of the Secretary-General, including a complex one on security. Exact dates were arranged in consultation with conference services to enable the servicing of meetings within existing resources.	Request approved
Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters	To convene the forty-third session of the Board from 30 June to 2 July 2004 in Geneva rather than New York in order to give members the opportunity to confer with participants in the Conference on Disarmament. Moreover, since the Board also serves as the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, the Geneva venue permits the Board members to be in close contact with the staff of the Institute. Videoconferencing as an alternative was ruled out owing to the extra cost it would incur, compared to moving the meeting, which generally results in less expenditure than holding the meeting in New York.	Request approved
International Civil Service Commission	To hold its fifty-eighth session at the headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in Paris. As provided for in General Assembly resolution 40/243, this body may hold one of its two annual meetings at the headquarters of a participating organization, upon invitation.	Request approved
Commission on Social Development	To convene one additional meeting between 19 and 23 February 2004 in order to take action on remaining text in its report and thus conclude the work of its forty-second session, which, owing to time constraints, could not be accomplished on the scheduled final day of the session.	Request approved